(d) Does not arise.

Funds for Agricultural Marketing

1591. DR.AKHILESH DAS: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have launched a scheme to make available funds for developing and strengthening agricultural marketing only for such States as have made certain policy changes towards reforms;

(b) if so, the nature and details of the policy changes required for the State Governments to qualify for the aid under this scheme; and

(c) the exten of aid extended there-under to different States, so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) Yes, Sir. The Government has recently approved a Central Sector Scheme titled "Development/Strengthening of Agricultural Marketing Infrastructure, Grading and Standardization". Under the scheme, credit linked investment subsidy shall be provided on the capital cost of general or commodity specific infrastructure for marketing of agricultural commodities and for strengthening and modernization of existing agricultural markets, wholesale, rural periodic or in tribal areas. The scheme is linked to reforms in State Law dealing with agricultural markets (APMC Act).

(b) Under the existing APMC Act, State Government alone is empowered to initiate the process of setting up of markets for agricultural commodities in notified areas. Processing industry can not buy directly from the farmers. The farmer is restricted from entering into direct contract with any manufacturer as the produce is required to be canalized through regulated markets. These restrictions are acting as a disincentive to farmers, trade and industries. The State Governments have, therefore, been advised to amend the APMC Act to allow direct marketing and contract farming and to permit setting up of competitive markets in private and cooperative sectors. Assistance under the new Scheme will be provided in those States that amend the APMC Act accordingly.

(c) The Scheme was approved by Government for implementation on 20.10.2004. All the States have since been requested to inform as to

whether necessary amendments to APMC Act have been carried out, in order to notify the reforming States for applicability of the Scheme. Reply from the States is awaited. As such, no assistance under the Scheme has been provided to States so far.

Timings of Kathgodam and New Delhi Sampark Kranti Express

1592. SHRI SHARAD ANANTRAO JOSHI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that passengers from hilly areas of Uttaranchal are left standard and are unable to use the Sampark Kranti Express between Kathgodam and Delhi, as it arrives and departs from Kathgodam at 10.45 RM. and 8.50 A.M. respectively, and the State Government has banned public transport on hills during night;

(b) if so, whether Government would change the departure timing of the train to 4 RM. from Kathgodam and 9 A.M. from Delhi; and

(c) whether Government propose a link train from Ramnagar be connected with this train similar to the Ranikhet Express to benefit people ofGarhwal?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) Rescheduling of 5035/5036 Kathgodam-Delhi Uttaranchal Sampark Kranti Express has been examined but not found feasible due to severe operational constraints.

(c) No, Sir.

Subsidy *vis-a-vis* Interest of Farmers

†1593. SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD:

SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn towards the statement made by the Planning Commission wherein it has been said "The key for the development of Agriculture is to increase the capital investment and not to give subsidy";

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.